

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 have been examined and remain in the Application. In this response, no claims are canceled, Claims 17 and 18 are added, and Claims 1-4 and 16 are amended.

Accordingly, Claims 1-18 are pending.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

In the latest Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-11 and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Harvey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,360,729). To the extent that the rejection applies to the amended claims, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

For the purpose of clarification, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to recite that the two cable sections (having a first end suitable for being coupled to a complementary connector and a second end configured to be fixed to a casing) are separated by at least one casing. Applicant respectfully submits that this claim amendment is supported by the original disclosure. Specifically, as shown in Figure 3 of the present patent application, the two cable sections provided at the ends of the module 40 are separated by at least one casing.

As to the amended Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Harvey fails to disclose a module for acquiring geophysical signals, in which two cable sections (having a first end suitable for being coupled to a complementary connector and a second end configured to be fixed to a casing) are separated by at least one casing, as claimed in amended Claim 1. In rejecting Claim 1 as being anticipated by Harvey, the Examiner equates both ends of 20c shown in figure 7 of Harvey as the two cable sections. However, the both ends of cable 20c of Harvey are not separated by at least one casing, as recited in amended Claim 1. As such, Harvey does not teach or suggest all of the limitations as claimed by Applicant.

With respect to Claim 16, Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments to this claim is supported by the original specification (see page 12, lines 21-24 of the translated PCT application). Analogous arguments to those above apply to amended Claim 16. Particularly, Applicant submits that Harvey does not teach or suggest a module comprising a plurality of tracks to generate geophysical signals and a plurality of casings linked in series by cable sections, wherein each of the casings is individually linked to a respective one of tracks and each of the

casings houses a processor to process the geophysical signals generated by a respective one of the tracks, as recited in Claim 16. Additionally, there is nothing in Harvey that teaches or suggests two of the cable sections having a first end provided with a connector to detachably connect with a complementary connector of another module, and a second end configured to be attached to one of the casings, wherein a respective conductive element extending from each of the cable sections is coupled electrically to the processor housed in the respective casing, wherein the two of the cable sections are separated by at least one casing, as recited in Claim 16.

Furthermore, Applicant notes that the drawings (figures 1-7) and corresponding description of Harvey describe a multitrack architecture, in which each "remote unit" 132 is associated with multiple tracks. The remote units 132 of the Harvey system correspond to the casings B'(j) of the prior art multitrack system shown in Figure 2 of the present patent application. In this regard, the background section of the present patent application explicitly criticizes some of the drawbacks associated with such known multitrack architecture. Since the module claimed in Claim 1 recites an architecture in which each casing is individually linked to one track, Applicant submits that the multitrack architecture taught by Harvey teaches away from what is claimed by the Applicant. That is, at least one casing which is individually linked to one track (as claimed by the Applicant) cannot be taught by each remote unit 132 linked to multiple tracks as illustrated in Figure 7 of Harvey. In rejecting Claim 1, the Examiner asserts that Harvey discloses that "[u]sually a sensor group will contain one to thirty geophones electrically interconnected to form a signal data channel", citing column 1, lines 12-14 of Harvey. However, this passage (column 1, lines 12-14 of Harvey) referred to by the Examiner is extracted from the background section of the Harvey reference which merely describes conventional seismic exploration systems existing before the Harvey system. Applicant respectfully submits that there is no suggestion or motivation in Harvey to convert the multitrack system shown in figure 7 into the system corresponding to the invention by linking only one geophone to each remote unit 132.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 16 are not anticipated by Harvey and requests withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1 and 16. Dependent

Claims 2-11 and 13-15 are submitted as not being anticipated by Harvey at least for the reasons given in support of their base Claim 1.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Harvey in view of Richardson (U.S. Patent No. 3,855,566). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As Claim 12 is dependent on independent Claim 1, the discussion above with regard to Claim 1 and Harvey applies here. Because Harvey does not contain limitations recited in Applicant's independent Claim 1 as set forth above, and because Richardson does not cure these deficiencies, the combination of Harvey and Richardson does not teach or suggest Claim 12. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 12 is not obvious over Harvey in view of Richardson and requests withdrawal of this rejection.

III. New Claims

Applicant respectfully submits that New Claims 17 and 18 are supported by the original disclosure. As to New Claim 17, Applicant incorporates the prior arguments with respect to their base Claim 1. As to New Claim 18, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references teaches or suggests a casing that is connected to two separate cable sections. Specifically, New Claim 18 requires that each casing is connected to [1] one end of one of the cable sections and [2] one end of another one of the cable sections. At least for these reasons, Applicant is of the opinion that New Claims 17 and 18 are allowable.


CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections and objections is requested. Allowance is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date. If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge those fees to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666. If a phone interview would expedite the prosecution of this Application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (310) 207-3800.

Respectfully submitted,

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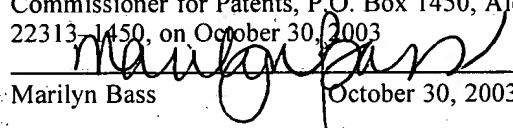


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Marilyn Bass

October 30, 2003